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S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 02 ADDIS ABABA 000918

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [MOPS](#) [KPKO](#) [SO](#) [ET](#)

SUBJECT: ETHIOPIA ON VIOLENCE IN MOGADISHU: REACH OUT TO
HAWIYE BUT ISOLATE REBEL ELEMENTS

REF: A. NAIROBI 1336 (NOTAL)

[1](#)B. NAIROBI 1335 (NOTAL)

[1](#)C. NAIROBI 1322 (NOTAL)

[1](#)D. ASMARA 316 (NOTAL)

[1](#)E. ADDIS ABABA 874 (NOTAL)

[1](#)F. ADDIS ABABA 858

[1](#)G. ADDIS ABABA 853

[1](#)H. 03/24/2007 EMBASSY NAIROBI-EMBASSY ADDIS TELCON
(AND PREVIOUS)

Classified By: AMBASSADOR DONALD YAMAMOTO. REASON: 1.4 (B) AND (D).

[1](#)1. (S/NF) Prior to, and in response to, intensified fighting in Mogadishu last week, Embassy Addis raised concerns with the Ethiopian Government on the situation in Somalia. In conversations with Embassy Nairobi, we reported on contacts with the ENDF and intelligence service. We called on the Chief of Staff, General Samora, on March 21, and met with State Minister of Foreign Affairs Takeda on March 20 and later in the week; and continued contact with Takeda by phone through the weekend. The Ethiopians have been consistent in their response, noting that they have been working with President Abdullahi Yusuf and Somalia's Transitional Federal Government (TFG) on security arrangements for Mogadishu. The Prime Minister was clear in our March 19 meeting (ref f) that they pushed Yusuf (including bringing him to Addis) on a comprehensive security plan that includes political dialogue with the Hawiye clan elders. The Prime Minister also emphasized the need for the TFG to handle disarmament in Mogadishu carefully, so as not to inflame clan rivalry. Embassy Nairobi's report (ref b) on Ethiopian outreach to the Hawiye clan refers to activities started in earnest a couple of weeks before. Foreign Minister Seyoum was in Mogadishu over a week ago, meeting with Hawiye and other clan elders. He reported, according to the Foreign Ministry, that there was general consensus on a need for a dialogue and the need to end the violence in Mogadishu.

[1](#)2. (S/NF) Prime Minister Meles noted that Ethiopia has reached out to the various clan elders, urging them not only to support the TFG, but also to support the upcoming reconciliation conference in April, which the Ethiopians consider critical to stability in Somalia. The Prime Minister expounded to us on Ethiopia's work with the TFG on

security of Mogadishu. While the TFG emphasized military action, the Prime Minister stressed political outreach to the clan elders as an essential element. The clans would be able to isolate rebel groups and elements opposed to reconciliation. The Prime Minister stated that Ethiopian troops would act militarily with the TFG only against rebel elements, and not the clans.

¶3. (S/NF) General Samora told Ambassador last week that the ENDF had completed most of its "initial" withdrawal plans from Somalia, but reaffirmed the Prime Minister's remarks to us that the ENDF would continue to keep a presence in Somalia, in order to support the security of the TFG, as well as of the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM), and to work with the TFG on enhancing security in Mogadishu before the reconciliation conference. It appears to us that the ENDF has concentrated its force in the Mogadishu and Baidoa areas. It is unclear how many ENDF troops there are, but we estimate they number approximately 7,000: down from the over 15,000 troops at the height of the conflict in December/January.

¶4. (S/NF) The Ethiopians are clearly focused on Mogadishu as the center of gravity for the stability of Somalia. The Prime Minister told the press last week that Somalia is stable and "relatively" calm. It is Mogadishu, however, which faces challenges. From our numerous contacts with the Ethiopians, securing Mogadishu is a top priority, particularly in preparation for the reconciliation conference. The Prime Minister and his senior staff know the high risks of the use of force, but also stress that if Mogadishu falls into violence, Somalia's stability would be at peril. The Prime Minister told us that the TFG effectively has three to six months to root out the core of

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the rebel elements; otherwise, Mogadishu could fall into chaos.

¶5. (S/NF) We will continue to monitor ENDF response/actions in Somalia. While noting our requests and that of the AU for the ENDF to provide support for AMISOM and the TFG, including force protection at the sea and airport, we continue to stress to the Ethiopians their plan of operation of highlighting political dialogue, and the risk of alienating Somali clan support should the ENDF resort primarily to force. We will call on Foreign Minister Seyoum, as soon as he returns to Addis from his foreign travels. While we intend to call on the Prime Minister next week, we will coordinate with Embassy Nairobi should this be required sooner. In the meantime, we remain in close contact with the ENDF, intelligence, and other senior Ethiopian officials.
YAMAMOTO